

VZCZCXRO2933
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK
DE RUEHRO #1588/01 2071108
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 261108Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8626
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE PRIORITY 2530
RUEHMIL/AMCONSUL MILAN PRIORITY 8812
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES PRIORITY 2679

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ROME 001588

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: D'ALEMA/KOSOVO: CAN'T LET RUSSIA IMPOSE WILL ON
EUROPE

ROME 00001588 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald P. Spogli, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

11. (C) The Ambassador probed FM D'Alema on Kosovo in a meeting on July 23, shortly after the minister returned from the GAERC. Ambassador noted that the situation was dangerous, and could blow up in Europe's face if there were no independence. FM D'Alema said recognition of Kosovo independence would be necessary in the end, and the EU can't let Russia impose its will on Europe. If the Russians were allowed to block Kosovo independence, it could end the whole process of European integration, and destabilize the area in a serious way -- all on Italy's borders. The FM said he intended to invite EU colleagues currently opposed to recognition (he named Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia) "to reflect seriously" on the consequences of a Russian blocking move. But D'Alema also felt time was needed for additional negotiations and that it would be tactically important not to announce now that we intend to recognize Kosovo independence at the end of the process. Otherwise, the Kosovars would have no incentive whatever to negotiate seriously. On other issues, the Ambassador reinforced our message on the need to maintain financial pressure on Iran, and asked the FM to demarche Syria on the issue of foreign fighters to Iraq. He also took issue with the FM's recent public call for greater Palestinian "national unity", noting that the Palestinians actually faced a choice between Abbas and Hamas, so calling for Palestinian national unity, at this moment, was not particularly helpful, because it actually served to undermine Abbas and take the pressure off Hamas. End Summary.

Kosovo: EU Divided

12. (C) Ambassador, accompanied by POL M/C, met July 23 with FM D'Alema, shortly after the minister's return from the GAERC in Brussels. D'Alema was accompanied by his office director Fernando Nelli-Feroci, and another aide. The Ambassador probed first on Kosovo. He noted that the situation was dangerous there, and could blow up if there were no independence. Europe would then reap the result. We can't let Russia dictate on this, we need to act together.

13. (C) D'Alema said there was general agreement among EU ministers on the way forward on Kosovo, i.e. a US-EU-RU troika to lead the parties in negotiations. HR Solana would be considering who to name as the EU representative. But the

Italian FM sketched considerable EU disarray on Kosovo recognition. He said some countries endorsed the US approach, some say they will not agree to recognize Kosovo independence under any circumstances, and some say there is a need to negotiate now, but in the end there must be recognition, because the EU can't let Russia impose its will on Europe. Italy is in latter camp.

14. (C) The FM said he was persuaded that recognition was inevitable, but some time was needed for negotiations and it's tactically important not to say now (even if we believe it) that we will recognize Kosovo independence at the end of the process. This aspect of our discussions should remain "private among us". Otherwise, the Kosovars will have no incentive whatever to negotiate seriously. Chief of staff Nelli-Feroci noted that there would be a Contact Group experts meeting in Vienna soon to define terms of reference for the Troika effort. It would be important to have constructive ambiguity, on the recognition issue.

Russians Can't Be Allowed to Block

15. (C) D'Alema said if the Russians were allowed to block Kosovo independence, it could end the whole process of European integration, and destabilize the area in a serious way. And all this would occur on Italy's borders. The FM said he intended to invite his EU colleagues currently opposed to recognition (he named Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia) "to reflect seriously" on the consequences of a Russian blocking move.

16. (C) While talks go on, he noted, Kosovo will remain independent in fact, and the EU presence will continue. The EU is the arbiter, for better or worse. Serbia wants EU integration, and the Serbs can't have it without a Kosovo accord. And "Kosovo independence" ultimately depends on the

ROME 00001588 002.2 OF 003

EU, to the tune of 3 billion euros a year. So the EU has some leverage with the parties, and there should be an energetic effort to achieve agreement.

17. (C) Meanwhile, the juridical issue is a significant matter in the EU, e.g. Germany can't deploy troops/money, due to its constitutional restriction, unless a UNSCR is in place. While the EU countries could base deployment of troops/money on bilateral agreements with Kosovo, that would require recognition, and the EU as a whole isn't there yet. D'Alema said the EU was currently studying the possibility of a coalition of the willing in the event that EU internal agreement continues to prove elusive. Such an operation would be explicitly recognized as an EU effort, but only those members who wished to participate would do so.

Iran: Keep Up the Pressure

18. (C) Turning to Iran, the Ambassador stressed need to maintain international pressure, especially financial pressure, on Iran to bring them to the table and more productive talks on the nuclear issue. This was not a time for business as usual. D'Alema said Italy was doing its part, keeping up the financial pressure, acting against Bank Sepah. And the Iranians were angry with them about that. But no regime, he said -- witness Saddam Hussein -- has fallen due to sanctions. Political factors are what do it in the end. There was no better way to put this regime in difficulty than to put them at the negotiating table. The US was talking to them on Iraq, but not on the nuclear matter. They are thus allowed out of their isolation, but not put in any political difficulty.

19. (C) POL M/C noted the Iranians had two angles of

approach, if they were interested in making headway. The first was Iraq talks at the envoy level. The other was to suspend enrichment; in which case, the Secretary had offered talks at the highest level. So they have two different prospects. They are subtle people. If they want to engage, it will not be difficult for them to do so.

¶10. (C) Returning to the nuclear issue, D'Alema he said he understood the Iranians were on the verge of a capacity jump, from 3,000 to 8,000 centrifuges. Our priority should be to stop that. There was a process under way of clarifying outstanding issues between Iran and IAEA. He felt action in New York should be kept in abeyance as long as the IAEA's Baradei certifies that this process is ongoing.

Syria: Help Us With the Foreign Fighters Message

¶11. (C) The Ambassador told D'Alema it would be helpful if Italy were to address directly with Syria our common message on the need to take action the flow of foreign fighters through Syria to Iraq. D'Alema nodded, and his chief of staff made a note. POL M/C noted that Damascus Airport was a particular problem. The FM then launched on a long discourse on Bashar, the nature of the Syrian regime, and how different the son was from his father. He expressed some wonder -- and took as a sign of Bashar's weakness -- that VP Shara had requested to see D'Alema after the minister's meeting with Bashar. Under the father, he said, that would never have happened -- Hafiz al-Asad was the last meeting, and no one would presume to come after. Visit a tourist site, go to the museum, maybe, but that was always the last official meeting.

Hamas: The Issue Is Not National Unity

¶12. (C) The Ambassador noted that D'Alema had spoken in favor of Palestinian national unity, and reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. But the issue now, he said, was not national unity. It was that this is a time of choice for Palestinians, a choice between Hamas and Abbas. D'Alema said he had spoken in terms consistent with the letter of the ten EU foreign ministers; he had not called on the international community to engage with Hamas, but for greater Palestinian national unity, i.e. for Palestinians to engage with each other and for Hamas not to be driven in an even more radical direction. The Ambassador noted that the practical effect of calling for national unity now was to undermine Abu Mazin and reduce pressure on Hamas. The point was not recognizing that

ROME 00001588 003.2 OF 003

Hamas won an election or acknowledging that they have a following in Palestinian society. It's recognizing that Hamas can't pretend to function as part of a legitimate political system and then proceed to undermine that system by resorting to violence and terror. And it's up to all of us to help clarify for the Palestinians the choice before them.

Comment

¶13. (C) D'Alema saw us right after his return from the GAERC FMs meeting, and just before he was to appear before Parliament to testify on Italy's ME policy. He spent far and away the longest time talking about Kosovo. He appears to be with us on recognition, and recognizes the inevitability of it. But he is concerned to use the coming months not only to make an energetic effort with the parties, bolstered by serious EU blandishments to Serbia on integration, but also to work within the EU for a more coherent position. And on the latter, he recognizes that he has his work cut out for

him. End comment.

SPOGLI